



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH &
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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TDMDHDD CONTINUES TO COMBAT THE STIGMA OF MENTAL ILLNESS **2nd Annual Art for Awareness Day Held at State Capitol**

Nashville-- May is recognized nationwide as Mental Health Month, and in Tennessee, a special event for persons in recovery was held Tuesday, May 1st at the State Capitol. Sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (TDMHDD) and the Middle Tennessee Mental Health and Substance Abuse Coalition, the 2nd Annual Art for Awareness Day featured the works of over 80 mental health consumer artists.

During Tuesday's event, Governor Bredesen, TDMHDD Commissioner Betts, and several members of the 105th General Assembly were presented a unique piece of art created by mental health consumers to display in their offices throughout the month of May in recognition of Mental Health Month. Several regionally acclaimed artists submitted works, including Anne Ambrose and Allen Beech of Nashville and John L. Butts, Jr. of Clarksville.

"I commend the artists, as well as TDMHDD and the Middle Tennessee Mental Health and Substance Abuse Coalition for their collaboration in, again, making this event such a great success and in bringing attention to the importance of art and the role it plays in life and as a vehicle for recovery," stated Governor Phil Bredesen.

"It is important and special that so many Tennesseans have come together in support of this event for two years in a row." commented TDMHDD Commissioner Virginia Trotter Betts. "I admire the courage and commitment of every artist who participated in Art for Awareness Day, and I am gratified that Governor Bredesen and many legislators were so enthusiastic and supportive of this effort. I truly hope that consumer participation in this event will continue to grow in the coming years."

Art for Awareness Day was held in the House Chambers in the State Capitol. During the event selected consumer artists from across Tennessee registered their works, met with Commissioner Betts and their legislators, and enjoyed a reception in celebration of this annual event.

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